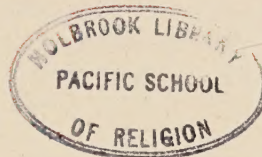


# ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the: World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council  
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association  
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

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No. 24/26th Year



June 19th, 1959.

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## WCC Central Committee Will Meet August 19 - 27 in Greece

(Geneva) - Leading churchmen of the world's Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox traditions will convene August 19 - 27 on the Island of Rhodes, Greece, to review progress on their cooperative work and plan future programmes.

The event will be the annual meeting of the policy-making 90-member Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. It will be the first committee meeting held in a country in which the Eastern Orthodox Church is the predominant religious body.

The nine-day session will be highlighted by the presentation of major papers including two on the topic "The Significance of the Eastern and Western Traditions Within Christendom", and by a series of reports dealing with current World Council concerns including religious liberty and areas of rapid social change.

The committee will also review plans for the World Council's Third Assembly and is expected to give final approval to plans for a new \$2,500,000 headquarters building in Geneva.

It is anticipated that the meeting will have the largest attendance of leaders of the Orthodox Churches in its history. These are expected to include

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representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem and the churches of Greece, Cyprus and Poland. (The Island of Rhodes is within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.)

Also expected to attend as observers are members of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church does not belong to the World Council. Observers are permitted to participate in meetings, but cannot vote.

The committee is expected to consider detailed plans for its Third Assembly to be held in Asia in 1961 including reports of three preparatory commissions dealing with "unity", "witness" and "service". The Assembly theme will be "Jesus Christ - the Light of the World".

In other sessions the committee is also scheduled to hear an up-to-date report on progress towards the proposed integration of the World Council and the International Missionary Council; review the theological basis for membership in the World Council, and appeal to its 173 member churches to support the United Nations sponsored World Refugee Year (June 28, 1959 to June 30, 1960).

The committee will also hear reports on a study on "Religious Liberty" and on the International Conference on Rapid Social Change to be convened July 25 - August 2 at Salonica, Greece, by the WCC's Department on Church and Society.

Speakers will include Dr. D.T. Niles, general secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference on "A Theology of Evangelism"; the Rev. E.H. Robertson, secretary of the United Bible Societies on "The Place and Use of the Bible in the Churches" and Dr. Edmund Schlink, professor of theology at the University of Heidelberg on "The Significance of the Eastern and Western Traditions Within Christendom".

Central Committee meetings are held annually between World Council Assemblies in various countries at the invitation of the churches of those countries. The invitation to meet in Rhodes was extended by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Church of Greece and the Royal Hellenic Government. The Central Committee met last year in Nyborg, Denmark.

EPS, Geneva

EMBARGO: for release on or after  
Sunday, June 28.

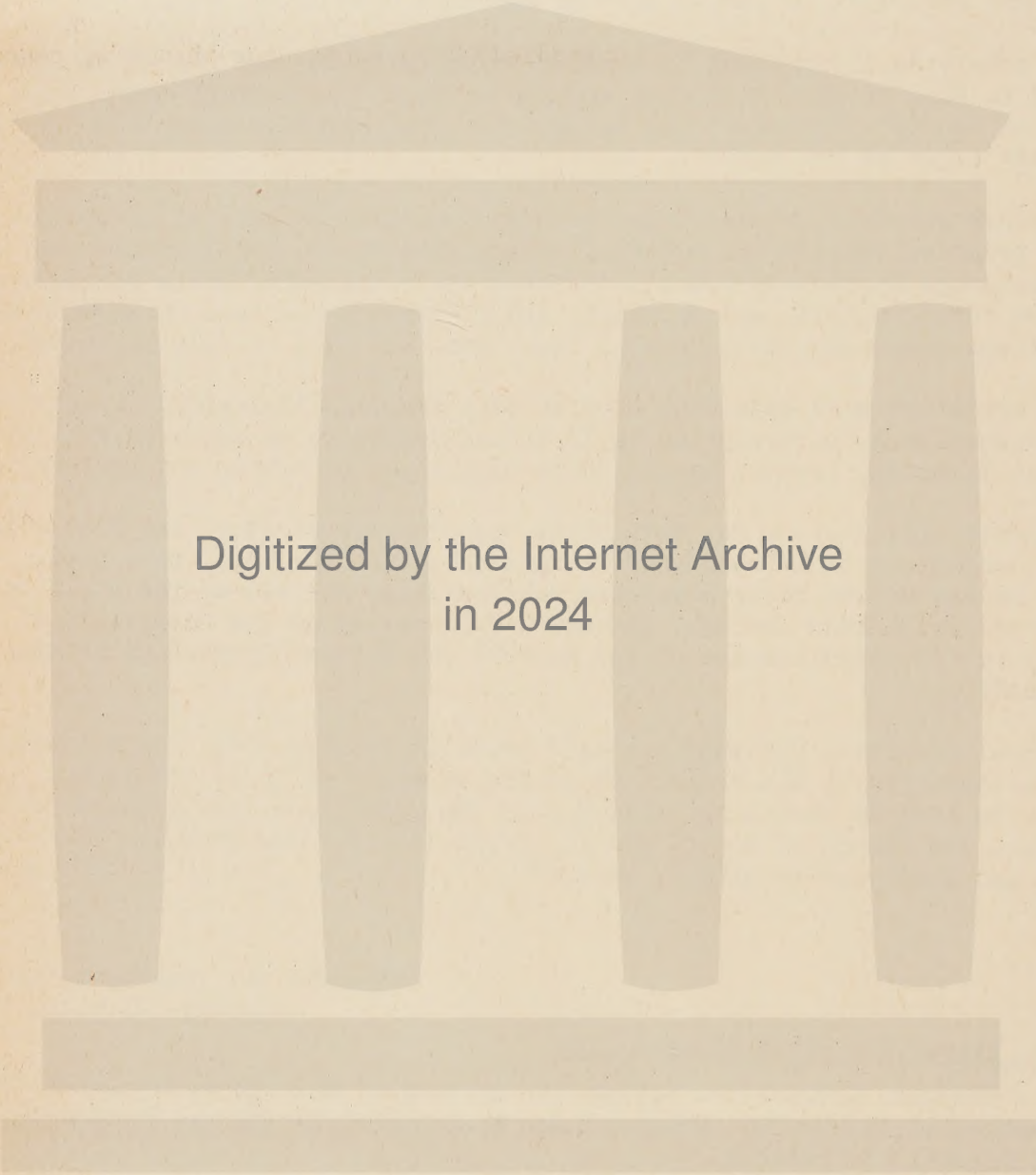
#### World-Wide Prayer for World Refugee Year

(Geneva) - Prayers, intensified action and continuing charity on behalf of the world's estimated 45,000,000 refugees have been called for by the Presidents of the World Council of Churches.

The appeal is contained in a special message issued to the WCC's 173 member churches of the Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox traditions in 52 countries in connection with the launching today (June 28) of the United Nations sponsored World Refugee Year.

The call to prayer is part of a world-wide crusade in which members of different confessions and religious faiths around the world are uniting this weekend in what has been termed "one of the greatest universal acts of prayer in the history of mankind".





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The World Council message terms the plight of the refugee "in our day and generation, our greatest human tragedy".

"For more than a decade", it says, the refugee has been "a challenge to our confession and compassion and must be a first call on the ministry of those whose Lord 'had nowhere to lay his head'".

The message states that the World Council welcomes the World Refugee Year programme because, "we have not... always been satisfied that the governments of the free world have been as constant in their concern for a problem which is not only one of human tragedy but, unremedied, is a continuing threat to peace and security".

It expresses gratitude to the World Council's member churches whose support has enabled it to help care for refugees, but concludes, "The time has now come for our churches to act on this new initiative and we therefore call anew for your prayers, your intensified action and your continuing charity."

(See page 9 for the complete text of the message.)

EPS, Geneva

#### Philippine Protestants Protest against Consecration to Sacred Heart

(Manila) - A ceremony in which The Philippines were "reconsecrated" to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by President Carlos P. Garcia has drawn a vigorous protest from the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches.

Dr. Gumersindo Garcia, Sr., Federation president, in a letter sent to President Garcia on the eve of the ceremony declared that it "violates the principle of separation of Church and state which requires that our democratic government should treat all churches equally. Our government which you represent should refrain from taking any official participation in any church activity whatsoever."

The ceremony was the climax of the 60th anniversary celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart held in Manila early this month.

In his letter Dr. Garcia stressed that "The Sacred Heart of Jesus celebration is an event which is peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church and one which non-Roman Catholics do not believe in. It is therefore not consistent with the democratic principle that they should be included in this consecration without their consent".

He cited the example of the late President Manuel L. Quezon and other government members who in 1937 refused to have their names included in a list of participants in the Eucharistic Congress because they believed it would be a violation of the principle of the separation of Church and state. He also noted that in 1956 when the late President Ramon Magsaysay participated in a similar ceremony he was "gracious enough to make an announcement later on that instead of consecrating the whole Philippines to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he was only consecrating the Roman Catholics".

EPS, Geneva





Anglican, Reformed Churches in South Africa Seek Greater Cooperation

(Capetown) - A six-point agreement aimed at promoting greater cooperation on mutual problems and aims has been reached by the Church of England in the Province of South Africa (Anglican) and the Dutch Reformed Church.

The agreement states that the two churches "will seek to devise new ways and means of consultation at all levels and desire to encourage office-bearers and members of both churches to foster a spirit of good will".

Further the churches recognize each other's "autonomy and responsibility to speak and act as they must" and agree "to inform each other of the reasons governing their policy and activity and to do everything in their power to avoid ill-founded deductions detrimental to the interests of a particular church".

The agreement stresses that the "churches disclaim political affiliation with any party or group and recognize the sincerity of each church to act in the light of God's Word and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit".

The agreement was issued after private talks between representatives of the two churches. In a statement issued in connection with announcement of the agreement, Dr. Joost de Blank, Anglican Archbishop of Capetown, said the talks had been conducted in "an atmosphere of frankness and goodwill. Neither church compromised its own principles or convictions, but each came to a better understanding of the other." He said "the differences separating the churches have been neither ignored nor minimized, but I believe the meeting opens a new era of mutual consultation and respect..."

Anglican church leaders participating in the talks were the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg; the Rt. Rev. B. Burnett, Bishop of Bloemfontein; the Rev. C.T. Wood, Archdeacon of Capetown; the Rev. E.L. King, Deacon of Capetown and Canon A. Zulu.

Representatives of the Dutch Reformed Churches were the Rev. Dr. A.J. van der Merwe, Moderator of the Cape Synod; the Rev. P.S.Z. Coetzee, Moderator of the Free State Synod; the Rev. A.M. Meiring, Moderator of the Transvaal General Synod; the Rev. C.B. Brink, Moderator of the Southern Transvaal Regional Synod; the Rev. H.J.C. Snyders, Moderator of the Natal Synod and the Rev. W.A. Landman, Secretary of the Cape Synod.

EPS, Geneva

Funds Sought for Memorial Trust for Bishop Bell

(London) - An appeal for funds to establish a trust in memory of the Right Rev. G.K.A. Bell, former Anglican Bishop of Chichester, England, and an Honorary President of the World Council of Churches, has been issued here. Goal of the appeal is £50,000 (\$140,500).

Funds gathered will be used "to commemorate, on an international scale, the causes which were particularly dear" to Bishop Bell during his life-time, it has been reported. These will include a programme to revive religious art and a plan to restore the Arundel Screen, "one of the finest examples of mediaeval stone work" in England to its original position in Chichester Cathedral, from which it was removed more than one hundred years ago.

Signatories of the appeal include the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; the Bishop of Chichester; Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill, formerly presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA; Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches and Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin.

EPS, Geneva







### Controversy Threatens Korean Christian Council

(Seoul) - The existence of the 13-year-old National Christian Council of Korea is being threatened by a controversy between its two largest cooperating bodies, according to informed sources here.

The controversy stems from a dispute between its two major Presbyterian bodies over which is the original Korean Presbyterian Church. Involved are a number of court cases over disputed property which have hinged on the question of which group is the true parent body.

The two bodies are the Presbyterian Church in Korea which has about 75 percent of all Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, which with 15 per cent of the total is the second largest Presbyterian body in the country. Presbyterians represent half of the country's Christians and three quarters of its Protestants. (The ROK body is linked with the United Church of Canada.)

Key issue in the controversy, which dates back to the end of the Korean War, is the demand by the General Assembly of the larger body that the ROK church give up its claim to being the original church and number its General Assembly meetings from 1953. Otherwise, the majority body says, it cannot continue membership in the National Christian Council alongside "a competitive group which claims to be us". It is reported to be prepared to withdraw from the council if the ROK church does not give up its claim.

Informed sources have indicated the dispute is the most serious in the council's history and that unless it is settled before its summer meetings the organization's future is "dim".

The third largest cooperating body in the council, the Holiness Church of Korea, has also threatened to withdraw if the majority Presbyterian group leaves the council. Also involved are United States missionary groups in Korea, because the council grants them membership only as long as they are associated with a national church which is itself a member. EPS, Geneva

### New Spanish Language Publication for Latin America

(Montevideo) - A first issue of a bulletin in Spanish on the problems of church and society has been published in Montevideo, Uruguay, by the Friends of the World Council of Churches in Latin America in cooperation with the council's Department on Church and Society in Geneva.

The new publication, entitled "Iglesia y Sociedad en America Latina" is believed to be the first ecumenical periodical dealing with social issues appearing in the Spanish language and directed to a Latin American reading public. According to a department spokesman, it will be published twice yearly and will carry articles dealing both with the concerns of the Church in Latin America and abroad.

Chairman of the editorial committee is Mr. Luis Odell, secretary of the Federation of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay. EPS, Geneva







### French Physicists Seek Church Help in Answering Questions

(Villemétrie, France) - A group of French physicists has asked the French Council of Churches to set up a commission to undertake "a systematic study of all the problems which the Church has to face owing to the development of scientific techniques".

A letter sent to the council suggests that such a commission should be composed of scientists, theologians and politicians and that it should seek to inform the Church at large about its conclusions.

The physicists suggested that basic questions to be studied by the commission should be:

1. Is there a point at which scientific research oversteps the limits imposed by God on man at the creation?

2. Can technical progress be continued indefinitely without constituting a menace to the humanity of man?

3. Is not atomic warfare a form of anarchy, rather than a means of maintaining order?

The physicists also suggested that the Church should help its members engaged in scientific work to understand their Christian responsibilities and should give particular help to those who are concerned about whether they ought to participate in certain forms of scientific research.

The letter warned that the outbreak of nuclear war "which would be equivalent to general suicide might occur in a moment of collective or individual madness or even as the result of an accident".

Ought not the Church's opposition to atomic war, they asked, "take the form of exhortation to disobey the State in this matter"?

The letter concludes, "In our opinion the Church of Christ should proclaim the message of peace entrusted to it, and should refuse to submit to any illusory political considerations."

The group of physicists has been meeting periodically at the Protestant Study Centre at Villemétrie to discuss the questions raised in its letter to the council.  
EPS, Geneva

### Church Activity Now Grounds for Divorce in East Germany

(Berlin) - An East German court has ruled that active participation in church life constitutes "strong grounds for divorce".

In awarding a divorce in a recent case the court was reported to have said that "progressive-thinking people in our state of workers and farmers cannot be expected to remain tied to a marriage partner who leans more and more towards the Church".

The case in point was said to involve a woman who had led "a good married life at first, but since 1946 leaned more and more towards the Church". Testimony was offered to the effect that she attended services on Sunday and also took part in other church activities "at least twice a week". By so doing the court said the defendant "created an estrangement between herself and her husband" which constitutes sufficient grounds for divorce.  
EPS, Geneva







Plan Approved for United Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa

(Capetown) - A draft plan looking towards eventual union of the five Dutch Reformed churches of South Africa into a single church has been approved here.

The plan will now be submitted to the governing bodies of the five churches for their consideration and action. The five bodies considering the merger are now members of the Federal Council of Churches which was organized following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Attempts to achieve closer union since then have been unsuccessful.

The five churches were established independently of one another as the result of a ruling by the Supreme Court of the Cape Colony nearly a century ago which excluded representatives of congregations outside the Colony from membership in the Cape Synod.

The churches considering the merger in addition to the Cape Synod are the Reformed churches in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal and South-West Africa.

If approved, the new church will have a membership of 1,200,000 persons in an area stretching from the Cape to Kenya. EPS, Geneva

Continued Aid Urged for Underdeveloped Countries

(Geneva) - A prominent French Protestant layman and politician has urged that the wealth of the industrialized nations of the world be "regularly devoted" to providing aid for underdeveloped areas.

The speaker was Professor André Philip, faculty member of the University of Paris and a former Cabinet Minister. He addressed a service of worship marking the 40th anniversary of the founding of the International Labour Organization held under joint auspices of the World Council of Churches and the National Protestant Church of Geneva.

Professor Philip urged that not only material aid, but technical assistance should be provided to underdeveloped countries by men who are well-informed about the country and "inspired with the desire to help its people become free men who can enter into the world-wide community of mankind".

He emphasized that Christians know that such freedom cannot be identified with any particular civilization and that "there will never be a society which can be described as 'Christian'. The Christian lives in freedom, not through freedom", he said. "He glorifies God alone. We must be his loyal instruments by resisting evil and bringing a little more justice and freedom into the world."

Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, conducted the service. The lessons were read by Sir Guildhaune Myrddin-Evans, a member and former chairman of the governing body of ILO and Pastor Roger Campiche, vice-president of the association of Geneva pastors.

The ILO, which is the oldest of the specialized agencies which form the "United Nations family", has headquarters in Geneva. EPS, Geneva





East German Pastor and Family Forced From Home

(Berlin) - The Council of the Evangelical Church of the Union has reported that an **East German pastor and family** have been turned out of their home in Hoyerswerde by local government authorities, in what it described as "apparently an attempt to hinder the important pastoral work of the church in the area".

It said that the pastor, his wife, who is expecting a baby within a few weeks, and their young child, were literally turned out into the streets with all their furniture in "a manner contrary to the barest principles of humanity".

The council reported that appeals to the "humanity" of local authorities had been rejected with the remark that "it is no concern of ours". Protests to other state authorities, including the Secretary of State for Church Affairs in Berlin, were not successful either, it said.

Meanwhile, the pastor was reported to be living in the church, and his wife and child staying with the family of another pastor. EPS, Geneva

In Brief

Bishop Martti Sinojoki of Mikkeli has been appointed the first Lutheran Bishop of Helsinki. His new diocese, which has some 450,000 parishioners in the capital city and another 50,000 in the immediate surroundings, has been carved out of the Diocese of Tampere of the Church of Finland. It brings to eight the number of dioceses in the church. Bishop Sinojoki is chairman of the Finnish National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation.

\* \*

An initial gift of \$25,000 for establishment of a John Foster Dulles Library and Research Centre in the new headquarters building of the National Council of Churches has been announced in New York. The contribution in memory of the late Secretary of State was made by the law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell, of which Mr. Dulles was a member from 1911 to 1949. The library will be located in the Inter-Church Centre now under construction. It will house both NCC and denominational agency offices.

\* \*

The British Government has announced it will immediately introduce a bill to amend the Education Act of 1944 to increase state aid for the country's financially hard-pressed confessional schools. There are 29,145 primary and secondary schools in Britain, of which 8,210 are run by the Church of England (Anglican), and 1,964 by the Roman Catholic Church. Leaders of both churches had sought the increase. The bill to be introduced raises from 50 to 75 per cent government grants towards the cost of enlarging and modernizing existing schools.

\* \*

Ordination of women to the ministry has been approved by the Synod of the Moravian Brethren Church meeting in Bad Boll, Germany. The Synod has also adopted revised church order which includes new liturgical forms for baptism, confirmation, funerals, the Lord's Supper and the ordination of pastors. The church has about 10,000 members in East and West Germany. EPS, Geneva







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WORLD REFUGEE YEAR

Statement by  
World Council of Churches' Presidents

We are convinced that in our day and generation our greatest human tragedy is that of the refugee - homeless people all around the world.

The refugee and his family have, for more than a decade, been a challenge to our confession and compassion and must be a first call on the ministry of those whose Lord "had nowhere to lay his head".

We believe that, within the limits of our resources, the World Council of Churches has answered this call unremittingly and consistently, and we express our gratitude to our member churches who have made this possible.

Our ministry has not been motivated because all the refugees belong to our member churches - indeed most of them do not. We do it because Christ compels us. We have not, however, always been satisfied that the governments of the free world have been as constant in their concern for a problem which is not only one of human tragedy but, unremedied, is a continuing threat to peace and security. For this very reason we welcome with cordiality and renewed hope the decision of the United Nations to proclaim World Refugee Year.

Our Executive Committee, meeting in February, adopted the following resolution which we commend to your attention:

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

NOTING with satisfaction that 59 governments, members of the United Nations "convinced of the need to make a further world-wide effort to help resolve the world refugee problem", have resolved to declare a World Refugee Year to begin in June 1959,

REAFFIRMING the ongoing and permanent concern of the World Council of Churches for homeless people, whoever they are and wherever they are,

WELCOMES most cordially the decision of the United Nations to proclaim such a year in the hope that all governments supporting the resolution will take some positive action to validate their votes,

AFFIRMS that the World Council of Churches, in addition to its permanent service, will do all in its power to cooperate in any constructive initiative taken by governments to solve the problem of refugees.

EMPHASIZES to governments and all concerned that there are so many refugees, and such difficult situations, that their problems simply cannot be solved in one year, yet earnestly hopes that the problems of many more may be solved in this year than in any previous year, and that the World Refugee Year may result in far greater attention to their needs in the years to follow,

PRAYS God's blessing on this initiative.

The time has now come for our churches to act in this new initiative and we therefore call anew for your prayers, your intensified action and your continuing charity.

EPS, Geneva

